



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### SOME IMPROVEMENT NOTED IN WATERFOWL SITUATION

"Waterfowl production has shown some improvement this spring but, compared to the favorable years of the past, the breeding grounds are still seriously underpopulated," Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, declared today as he released a summary of developments on the waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada and the northern United States.

"We hope that the present improvement will still be in evidence not only at the end of the current breeding season but also at the start of next year's nesting." This year's breeding season, which was several weeks late in getting under way is still unfinished.

Mr. Day stated that as the result of excellent cooperation from a number of interested agencies the Service has been able to obtain a clearer picture this year of how ducks and geese are faring on the breeding grounds.

North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Nebraska, for example, joined with the Fish and Wildlife Service in making ground or aerial surveys of breeding grounds within their boundaries.

These surveys were correlated with similar investigations in Canada where the Dominion Wildlife Service, the Provincial Game Branches of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan pooled their manpower and efforts with the Service. Ducks Unlimited and the Wildlife Management Institute also contributed to the pool of information, said Mr. Day.

Following are some highlights from the summary report of breeding ground developments:

In Manitoba the waterfowl situation as a whole is either one of "no change" or of "very slight improvement." Early floods and subsequent high waters have caused nesting losses, especially in the large marshes and in the river delta areas. In the agricultural belt the situation continues to be fairly good.

In Saskatchewan the return of breeding waterfowl showed a noticeable but small improvement over 1947. The increases were especially evident in the southern short-grass plains. Southwest and west of Regina there was an abundance of spring water but this area is rapidly drying up and production losses may be anticipated.

In Alberta the number of breeding birds showed a definite increase. Prospects for a fair production seem good but drought conditions now appearing in the eastern part of the Province will probably reduce somewhat the expected gains.

In northern Canada waterfowl observers expect that improved production will develop in the Lake Claire marshes and the Gordon Lake Area which have optimum water levels for duck nesting. In general, the breeding populations of the areas covered to date appear to be about the same as last year, with the possibility of a moderate increase.

In British Columbia the success of the breeding season is considered to be still in doubt due primarily to the comparatively few breeding pairs observed on accessible areas and to the severe floods which have ravaged many of the large river valleys. Recent information from the Caribou District indicates that that area has a reduced duck population.

Within the United States, in the northwestern states, the duck breeding situation is generally satisfactory. Improvements are apparent among mallards, gadwalls, shovellers, cinnamon teal and Canada geese. Water, cover, and good conditions in most sections are reported in excellent condition now.

In North and South Dakota the waterfowl picture was also satisfactory this spring. Water conditions appear ample to insure normal water for ducklings, except in a few sections.

In the Upper Mississippi area waterfowl populations were found to be considerably lower than those in the northcentral prairies. Waterfowl habitat in western Minnesota was subject to some drying but this was not considered as seriously affecting the hatch.

In the northeastern part of the United States no significant change is apparent in waterfowl breeding conditions. Although May floods caused some damage in Maine, reports are to the effect that renesting proceeded satisfactorily.

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